UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/2026
20 November 1995

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* United Nations launches inter-agency appeal for $208 million to fund humanitarian assistance in former Yugoslavia from January to April 1996.

* In message for Africa Industrialization Day, Secretary-General says international community must support and sustain continent's development efforts.

* General Assembly holds special commemorative meeting to mark United Nations Year for Tolerance; speakers condemn Nigeria's execution of nine minority rights activists.

* Secretary-General appeals to NGO community to help him resolve United Nations financial crisis; says governments must be persuaded to pay their contributions in full and on time.

* Member States owe United Nations $2.6 billion as of 15 November; $646 million owed to regular budget and $1.95 billion to peace-keeping and International Tribunals.

* Secretary-General to pay official visit to Canada from 21 to 23 November; will meet with Prime Minister and Foreign Minister in Ottawa.

* Disarmament and International Security Committee approves draft resolution that would have General Assembly urge States to support negotiations for nuclear-test-ban treaty.

* Secretary-General recommends Security Council extend UNDOF mandate for six months to 31 May 1996.

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For information media—not an official record

* Secretary-General appoints Major-General Mahmoud Talha of Egypt as Chief Military Observer of UNOMIL.

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The United Nations today launched an inter-agency appeal for $208 million to fund humanitarian assistance in the former Yugoslavia from January to April 1996. The appeal was based on a planning figure of 3.3 million beneficiaries in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

The total number of new asylum seekers and displaced persons in the former Yugoslavia rose to 500,000 last year. Military offensives by the parties increased before the signing of the cease-fire agreement on 12 October. From early September until the end of October, 200,000 people in the region were obliged to leave their homes to seek security elsewhere. That large displacement followed the flight of more than 280,000 people from their homes between May and August.

The appeal document noted that "more hope has been engendered in the recent peace initiatives than in any other." United Nations agencies expressed optimism and hope that a turning point had been reached in the conflict, but added that the uncertainty of future developments and the winter ahead made the appeal necessary. The future form of humanitarian assistance would depend on the outcome of the peace initiatives, the content of an eventual peace agreement, future geographical and political boundaries, overall coordination mechanisms and the movement of internally displaced persons and refugees.

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Africans are primarily responsible for their own development, but the international community must support and sustain their efforts, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a statement on the occasion of Africa Industrialization Day, he said the United Nations system must move simultaneously in several directions to help bring about the continent's development.

The Secretary-General outlined several priorities: strengthening regional institutions and promoting intensified regional cooperation; helping African countries diversify their economies; dealing with the problem of African debt; helping African countries establish effective social institutions; and supporting the efforts of African countries to improve public education and vocational training.

"The celebration of Africa Industrialization Day should impart fresh impetus to the efforts of Africans to push ahead despite the difficulties," he concluded. "For those of us in the United Nations system, this Day should be a tangible reminder of the need to redouble our efforts and to do an even

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better job of assisting Africa. And for the larger community of nations, let this Day be marked with renewed resolve to help Africa fulfil its hopes and dreams for a brighter future."

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The execution of minority rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others by the Nigerian Government called into question its commitment to human rights, the General Assembly was told today during a special commemorative meeting marking the United Nations Year for Tolerance.

The representative of Spain, speaking on behalf of the European Union, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, said the executions constituted a clear failure by Nigeria to honour its commitment to human rights. The European Union had already taken measures with regard to the situation in Nigeria and was considering additional ones.

The United States representative called on all Member States to join her country in taking unilateral steps against the Nigerian regime. The executions violated numerous provisions of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, to which Nigeria was a party, and called into question the regime's commitment to restore the country to democracy and the rule of law.

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In an address to the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations at Headquarters today, the Secretary-General appealed to the NGO community to help him resolve the financial crisis confronting the United Nations. He asked NGOs to try to convince their governments to pay their arrears, and to pay future contributions on time and in full. He warned that without peace and the global efforts of the United Nations, the best intentions for development and democratization would be overshadowed by conflict and social troubles.

The Secretary-General said NGOs must take the lead in three areas: mobilization of popular participation and support; broadening debate and expanding understanding of the issues at stake; and ensuring that commitments were implemented -- that actions followed words. It was the follow-up, rather than the take-off, that would make the difference between success or failure, he stressed.

The United Nations and the world community could benefit from a responsible, coherent, and independent NGO movement, he went on to say. NGOs no longer needed to struggle for acceptance or recognition. Their performance at the United Nations global conferences and their ability to shape the international agenda were recognized and accepted. "The challenge today, for

the non-governmental organizations, is to find a structure that allows them to retain their vitality and their diversity, while channelling their energies into a powerful force, representing the peoples of the world."

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As of 15 November, Member States owed the United Nations a total of $2.6 billion, according to the latest update on the Organization's financial situation. Of that amount, $646 million was for assessments for the regular budget and $1.95 billion was for peace-keeping operations and the International Tribunals.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali will pay an official visit to Canada from 21 to 23 November. He will hold talks in Ottawa with Governor-General Romeo LeBlanc, Prime Minister Jean Chretien and other Cabinet members, including Foreign Minister Andre Ouellet. The talks will centre on Canada's commitment to peace-keeping operations and to the United Nations system as a whole, and ways of strengthening that relationship to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The Secretary-General will meet members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and will participate in a round-table discussion hosted by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. He will also deliver a public lecture, organized by the United Nations Association of Canada, on the future of the Organization in the post-cold war era.

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The General Assembly would urge all States to support the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament for a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, by a draft resolution approved by the First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) on Friday. The Assembly would call on all States participating in the Conference, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to give the highest priority to concluding a universal and verifiable ban, to be opened for signature by the Assembly's next session.

The First Committee approved eight more draft resolutions on a wide range of disarmament questions. Those texts dealt with nuclear disarmament; nuclear proliferation in the Middle East; the Review and Extension Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT); illicit traffic in small arms; moratoriums on the export of anti-personnel land-mines; the report of the Disarmament Commission; and regional centres for disarmament in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia and the Pacific.

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The Secretary-General has recommended that the Security Council extend the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) for six months to 31 May 1996. In a report dated 17 November, he said that despite the present quiet in the Israel-Syria sector, the situation in the Middle East continued to be potentially dangerous. It was likely to remain so unless and until a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East situation could be reached.

UNDOF was established in 1974 to supervice the cease-fire and agreement on disengagement between Israeli and Syrian forces. The Secretary-General said it was performing its functions effectively with the cooperation of the parties.

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The Secretary-General has appointed Major-General Mahmoud Talha of Egypt as Chief Military Observer of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL). General Talha will replace Major-General Daniel Opande of Kenya, who returned to his national service on 30 May.

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